

**For Immediate Release**

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November 9, 2000

**CH2M Hill to invest an additional \$50,000 in local economic development efforts**

RICHLAND, Wash. — CH2M HILL Hanford Group is doubling a grant it made earlier this year to the Tri-Cities Enterprise Association to support programs that promote local, non-Hanford job growth.

This spring, CH2M HILL gave \$50,000 to the enterprise association, which used it to support two economic development programs established at the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Now, CH2M HILL says it will kick in another \$50,000 to further support the same two programs.

"We're pleased to be working with two organizations that have a successful history of building the entrepreneurial climate in the Tri-Cities," said CH2M HILL economic transition manager Richard Reisinger. "This grant is consistent with our strategy of promoting non-Hanford job growth through support for entrepreneurs and the information technology industry."

As with the first \$50,000, the new money will be divided equally between providing assistance for local companies in the area of information technology through PNNL's Technical Assistance Program, and sustaining the laboratory's Entrepreneurial Program, which helps PNNL employees or area residents start new companies based on technologies developed at the laboratory or elsewhere.

Through the TAP, PNNL staff provides technical assistance, such as database and network development, up to 40 hours a year to each company in the program. The TAP has assisted about 350 Northwest companies since 1995. The Entrepreneurial Program has created more than 30 new companies since it began in 1995.

"Choosing to channel more resources into these two high-quality support programs again underlines TEA's commitment to ensuring local entrepreneurs get the best when it comes to technical assistance and transition assistance," said Bill Henderson, president of the Tri-Cities Enterprise Association.

"We find key resources – through our own staff and outside expertise – to help entrepreneurs transform their technologies into viable commercial products and services," added Marv Clement, entrepreneurial program manager at PNNL.

(more)

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So far, six companies have received assistance through CH2M HILL's spring grant, with several more pending. Those helped to date include:

Szen Corporation, a three-year-old software solutions company in Kennewick, Wash., that sells software for managing golf courses and develops business management software for other industries. The systems handle reservations and scheduling, payroll, inventory, event management and financial accounting. PNNL assisted Szen by creating software that stores information in a database while also displaying it visually to users. Staff at PNNL also advised Szen on business operations to make the new company more competitive and productive.

RTS Enabling Technology delivers software solutions to support clients in a variety of industries, including environmental, agriculture, geographic information systems, engineering and professional services. PNNL software engineers reviewed the Richland, Wash., company's proposed design for a wide-area network. PNNL staff then recommended hardware and approaches that will enable RTS ET staff to communicate via data, voice and video from their offices in the United States and England.

Durametal Brake Company will soon begin manufacturing replacement brake drums for trucks, buses and off-road heavy vehicles at its Richland, Wash. Using local economic development funds provided by CH2M HILL, PNNL contracted with several industry representatives to review Durametal's critical systems, ensuring operations could proceed efficiently and safely. Work included reviewing key equipment for safety and providing worker training for commercial machinery on site.

CH2M HILL Hanford Group Inc. is DOE's Office of River Protection prime contractor with responsibility for storing, characterizing and retrieving for treatment approximately 53 million gallons of highly radioactive and hazardous waste stored in underground tanks. An employee-owned company, CH2M HILL was founded in Corvallis, Ore., in 1946, and today serves clients on six continents with engineering, construction and operations services for environmental, energy, water, transportation and industrial infrastructure.

The Tri-Cities Enterprise Association is a nonprofit private corporation established in 1987 to act as a catalyst for new business creation and growth. TEA operates and manages the Technology & Enterprise Center in Richland and the Kennewick Business Center, both full service incubators. TEA interacts with other regional organizations in supporting and facilitating small business development.

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory is one of DOE's nine multiprogram national laboratories and conducts research in the fields of environment, energy, health sciences and national security. Battelle, based in Columbus, Ohio, has operated Pacific Northwest for DOE since 1965.

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